

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KUWAIT 03141 241407Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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R 241246Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1069
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
USINT BAGHDAD POUCH
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDAS
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 3141

E.O. 116"2: GDS
TAGS: PGOV
SUBJECT: GOK BEGINS "DIALOGUE" WITH KUWAITI PRESS: CON-
STITUTIONAL REFORM, BORDER MATTERS, GULF SECURITY

REF: (A) KUWAIT3091 (NOTAL), (B) KUWAIT 2823 (NOTAL),
(C) KUWAIT 3050 (NOTAL), (D) 76 KUWAIT 4265.

1. KUWAITI HEIR APPARENT/PRI MIN SHEIKH SA'AD AL-ABDULLAH
CALLED IN PUBLISHERS AND EDITORS OF LOCAL NEWS-
PAPERS AND MAGAZINES MAY 23 FOR THE FIRST ROUND TABLE
MEETING IN WHAT HE REPORTEDLY DESCRIBED AS A PROSPECTIVE
CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH THE PRESS. UNIQUE IN THE PAST
SEVERAL YEARS, THIS KIND OF DIALOGUE WILL BE REPEATEDAT
LEAST MONTHLY, ACCORDINGTO SA'AD. THE MEETING REPORTEDLY
STARTED OFF WITH A LECTURE BY SA'AD ON "PRESS RESPONSIBILITY,"
DUJUNG WHICH HE SAID HE EXPECTED THE PRESS TO EMPLOY
"SELF CENSORSHIP" IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST AND EXPRESSED
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PAGE 02 KUWAIT 03141 241407Z

REGRET OVER PAST SUSPENSIONS OF VARIOUS PUBLICATIONS,
BUT IMPLIED THATTHERE WOULD BE FURTHER SUSPENSIONS
SHOULD THERE BE "CONFUSEDAND UNSUBSTAFTIATED REPORTING"
OR THE EXPRESSION OF TRENDS OR IDEAS THAT CAUSE TROUBLE.

2. IN THE QUESTIONING WHICH FOLLOWED, SA'AD IS REPORTED
AS CONFIRMINGTHATTHE KUWAITI "DEMOCRATIC LIFE"

(NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DISSOLVED IN 1976) WOULD BE "RESTORED AS PROMISED BY HIS HIGHNESS, THE LATE AMIR, AND WHICH IS ALSO THE WISH OF HIS HIGHNESS, THE PRESENT AMIR." HE NOTED THAT CONSTRUCTION IS PROCEEDING ON A NEW ASSEMBLY BUILDING AND THAT THE AMIR CONTEMPLATES ESTABLISHING A CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION COMMITTEE WITHIN A MATTER OF A FEW WEEKS.

3. SHEIKH SA'AD ALSO COMMENTED ON A VARIETY OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, IN RESPONSE TO EDITORS' QUERIES. MOST NOTABLE WERE THE REVELATIONS THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED WITH IRAQI INT MIN AL-DURI THE BORDER QUESTION, DURING THE LATTER'S MAY 16-19 VISIT (REF C), THAT THE RESULTS OF THESE DISCUSSIONS WERE "SATISFACTORY," AND THAT A KUWAITI TEAM WILL GO TO IRAQ TO DISCUSS RIVER WATER PURCHASES. SA'AD ALSO SAID THAT SECURITY FOR GULF OIL RESOURCES CALLS FOR COOPERATION OF ALL GULF COUNTRIES, INCLUDING IRAQ AND IRAN. VARIOUS INCONSISTENT PRESS REPORTS CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING QUOTES ON GULF SECURITY: "WE KNOW THAT THE SUPERPOWERS HAVE THEIR PLANS FOR THE OIL REGIONS." "THEY ARE TRYING TO DOMINATE IT." "UNLESS WE COOPERATE WE WILL FACE THREATS." "I ASK MY BROTHERS IN THE GULF TO FEEL THE DANGER." "SOME FOREIGN POWERS HAVE PLANS TO CREATE UNREST BY ENCOURAGING LOCAL DISSIDENT FACTIONS... OTHERS FOR EXTERNAL INVASION."

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PAGE 03 KUWAIT 03141 241407Z

4. COMMENT: REGARDING CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION, IF THE AMIR REALLY PLANS TO SET UP A CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION COMMITTEE WITHIN A FEW WEEKS, AND IF HE STICKS TO THE TIME SCHEDULE FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION OUTLINED BY HIS PREDECESSOR (REF D), WE WOULD EXPECT TO SEE PROPOSALS FOR A REVISED CONSTITUTION COMPLETED AND PRESENTED TO THE CABINET WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF THE DECREE ESTABLISHING THE COMMITTEE. THE AMIR STILL HAS THE OPTION, THEREAFTER, TO PRESENT A REVISED CONSTITUTION (EITHER TO THE PEOPLE IN A REFERENDUM OR TO THE "NEXT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY") FOR APPROVAL ANY TIME BEFORE AUGUST 29, 1980. THUS, SA'AD'S REMARKS ON MAY 23 GIVE NO HINT AS TO WHEN THE ASSEMBLY MIGHT BE REVIVED.

SUTHERLAND

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